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SUBJECT: **Deputy Secretary's Focus Report**

The following is a brief summary of Department of Transportation events and items of interest from the past month:

OPERATIONAL ITEMS:

US 101 DRAFT EIS GETS FHWA APPROVAL

The draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for US 101 corridor improvements between the cities of Aberdeen and Hoquiam was given approval by the Federal Highway Administration on September 30. The draft EIS is now being circulated for review and comments and a hearing has been scheduled for December 5 in Aberdeen. The goal of the proposed project is to provide the necessary infrastructure to allow industrial, commercial, and tourist activities in western Grays Harbor County to compete successfully at regional and international levels in the next century. Four alternatives for improvements have been identified in the DEIS. They are: (1) no build, (2) limited improvements on the existing route, (3) improvements to the truck route with a new crossing over the Hoquiam River, and (4) a new four-lane limited-access route using existing streets, new alignment, and/or railroad right-of-way, and includes new crossings over both the Hoquiam and Wishkah Rivers.

PUYALLUP RIVER BRIDGE RESURFACING PROGRESSES TO STAGE 4

Work to resurface the Interstate 5 Puyallup River Bridge in Tacoma has progressed to the fourth and last stage of the project. Crews are completing earthquake restrainer and barrier work. A one and one-half inch layer of asphalt will be put down on the fourth (far right) lane of the bridge to provide motorists with a level driving surface during the winter months. When the asphalt overlay is completed (expected by mid-November), the temporary barrier will be removed and the northbound Bay Street on ramp will be opened to traffic. Resurfacing with concrete to complete the deck overlay will be done next spring.

SELECT LOCAL AGENCY BRIDGES REHABILITATED OR REPLACED

The Local Agency Bridge Replacement Advisory Committee (BRAC) held their fall meeting October 23rd and selected bridge candidates for replacement or rehabilitation. The Committee selected 18 city/county replacement candidates totaling \$24.4 million, while 5

selections totaling \$3.4 million were made for rehabilitation. All selections made by the BRAC are subject to a field diagnostic review to determine the project scope and confirm the bridge's eligibility for federal funding. The team conducting the field review consists of local agency and TransAid engineers.

OIL REBATE FUNDING ANNOUNCED

WSDOT and the Attorney General's Office recently announced that 11 counties, 25 cities throughout the state, and the Northwest Region will receive funding in the total amount of \$3 million from petroleum damage funds. The funds were recovered by the state Attorney General in a Federal Court lawsuit charging oil companies with fixing the prices of gasoline and distillates in the past. The money will be used for school pedestrian safety projects within one mile of schools. A total of 66 projects can be funded with this amount out of a total of 177 projects that were submitted involving over 17 million in requests. WSDOT (Northwest Region) will receive funding for two projects in the amount of \$17,000.

AIRPORT ENCROACHMENT IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUES

Implementation of the Airport Encroachment process continued with several local and county comprehensive plans already reviewed as required by SB 6422. A briefing paper on the legislation and its implementation has been prepared and the Aviation Division continues to receive inquiries from local governments concerning the legislation and its implementation.

SUNNYSLOPE INTERCHANGE READY FOR RIBBON CUTTING

Paving and striping are completed, signals activated, and traffic is nearly back to normal on the Sunnyslope project in North Central Region. This advances the project completion date by at least six months. This interchange project under-ran cost estimate projections by approximately \$255,000. The under-run is due in part to the contractor being approximately 3 months ahead of schedule, over-estimates during design stage, and a contract change to pump stormwater more efficiently. The Sunnyslope Interchange Ribbon Cutting is scheduled for November 19 at 1:30 pm.

KINGDOME AREA INTERMODAL ACCESS PROJECT MOVING FORWARD

Work in the last month has been focused on moving toward an agreement wherein the department can build the first two-thirds of the one-way couplet alternative, as soon as possible, and the last third later on, when money and congestion dictate. The project team is defining congestion thresholds or "triggers" that will indicate the need to finish the project. Negotiations will continue at the directors level to decide exactly what trigger to use, who gets to pull it, and what exactly sets it off.

Most of the FHWA federal funds apportionment due to Washington State for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 1997 were received immediately after the start of the FFY on October 1, 1996. The amounts of Interstate Maintenance, National Highway System, Surface Transportation Program (STP) Base, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, Public Lands and Bridge received to date were very close to the previous estimates. The remaining portion of STP funding coming to Washington State as an equity adjustment called STP Hold Harmless is apparently now tied up in further discussion at the Washington, DC, level between USDOT/FHWA, Office of Management and Budget, General Accounting Office, Congress and the Treasury. This means that previous estimates of our STP Hold Harmless and other states equity adjustment funds may be questionable and possible Obligation Authority (OA) limitation level adjustments might result from the east coast discussions.

In the meantime, sufficient first quarter FFY 97 OA and other apportionments of federal funds exist to continue the state and local construction programs as originally

programmed. No slow down is anticipated as a result of the current inaction at the federal level.

“REAL TIME” TECHNOLOGY SAVES HOURS OF PROCESSING

Geographic Services Survey Section set a milestone this month by utilizing GPS “Real Time Kinematic” technology for a right of way survey project along 40 miles of SR 395 for the Eastern Region. This technique allows on-the-spot coordination, rather than requiring office processing. Over 300 monuments between Ritzville and Connell were positioned in five days, including travel time and set up for lane closures. Estimated reduction in survey time is 50 percent due to this process, thus saving approximately \$30,000.

INTERSTATE GUIDE MAKING A COMEBACK!

In response to frequent requests from customers, an updated version of the Interstate Guide is being developed, with completion of the artwork anticipated by the end of the year. This map has not been revised since 1991, and copies have been unavailable for several years. Requests for copies of this map come from both within the department and from the public, with particular demand being generated by common carriers. Revising and making available this popular map is one of Cartography’s strategies for improving relationships with all through better communications. No budget has yet been identified for publishing the map, but it is being developed in such a way that acceptable photo copies could be made and thus small quantities could be produced, if other options are not available.

COMPUTERS ASSIST IN STREAM SCOUR COLLECTION

The Bridge Office was provided with an early version of a computer program that is being developed to assist in stream scour collection. The new program was developed by researchers at the University of Washington under contract to WSDOT through the Research Office. The program is a customized version of a program being developed under an NCHRP project for use by all states. The new program gives the Bridge Condition Office the ability to track the historical changes in the streambed and surrounding landscape to give earlier warning of scour related problems. The program is used in the field on a laptop computer and includes the capability of storing digital images of the stream condition which can then be compared from year to year. This is another example of maximizing efforts by funding a small project that either leads to a large national effort or, in this case, uses national results and tailors them to WSDOT specific needs.

CONSOLIDATION OF GRANT PROCESS A POSSIBILITY

In anticipation of the re-authorization of ISTEA, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are considering a consolidation of the FHWA/FTA planning grant processes. In order to understand their customer needs better, both FHWA/FTA have asked the WSDOT to participate in a “pilot” consolidated FHWA/FTA planning grant process.

“URBAN” INTERCHANGE ONE OF THREE OPEN IN WA STATE

A new interchange was opened on I-5 at 99th Street in Vancouver on October 7, 1996. This “Urban” Interchange is the second of this type to open in the Southwest Region and the third in the state of Washington. The urban interchange is controlled by a single signal system as compared to the two signal systems required by the conventional diamond

interchange. This enables the interchange to operate more efficiently and carry a significantly higher volume of traffic than the conventional system. Work such as fencing, pavement markings, and signing will continue through Fall. Landscape work will continue through the Winter and is expected to be complete in the Spring of 1997.

WSF VASHON CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AWARDED

The WSF project that will close the Vashon main slip for replacement of the transfer span bridge has been awarded. Construction is scheduled for the Winter of 1996-1997. The auxiliary slip will remain open, but the terminal will not be able to accommodate two vessels at the dock at one time during reconstruction of the main slip. The main slip closure will occur in January/February 1997. A special service schedule will minimize service disruption caused by construction.

TERMINAL IMPROVEMENTS TO BEGIN THIS MONTH

The WSF Seattle Pedestrian Access Replacement project construction is expected to begin in November. This project will provide two new elevators and a new staircase, making the passenger level of the terminal ADA accessible.

An emergency was declared to address the deterioration of the existing steel barge used to dock passenger-only (P-O) boats at Seattle. Four emergency contracts are either under construction or in preparation for advertisement. The work includes replacement of the existing Pier 50 barge with a refurbished "Navy" barge.

The refurbishment of the "Navy" barge is underway. Additional work is required to mitigate lead paint found on the barge and to repair corroded sides and bottom found after the barge was dry-docked. The delivery date to our Eagle Harbor facility will be delayed about six weeks.

The installation of the Navy barge is scheduled for February, 1997, and will require closure of the Pier 50 P-O facility for at least eight days. Use of the Argosy dock at Pier 55 to allow continuation of service during the closure is under consideration.

A separate improvement project will also construct a new "T" shaped float at Pier 50 to support the new bow-loading P-O vessels. Design of the float has been delayed until the completion of the vessel selection process while construction is scheduled for completion one year after selection.

WSF LABOR RELATIONS UPDATE

All labor contracts have been ratified by the various memberships with the exception of the following:

MEBA Licensed & Unlicensed: Washington State Ferries has been waiting several weeks to obtain legal advice regarding a "\$35.00 payment to the MEBA Medical Fund." This is the only remaining issue that needs to be responded to prior to a ratification vote by the membership. We anticipate vote will occur within the next two weeks.

SEIU: All work has been completed and sent to the SEIU membership for ratification.

Labor Management Committee:

WSF and MM&P will hold its first Labor/Management Committee meeting under the new labor contract on October 31st. Several issues are on the agenda for discussion. These range from vessel safety issues to reviewing current duties of Masters and Mates relative to personnel and administrative issues.

BIDS OPEN FOR CONTRACTS

September 1996 Bids were opened on two preservation projects and two facilities projects for a total of four new contracts. The total engineer's estimate was \$32,036,036, with total bids of \$32,586,913, or 1.72 percent above the estimate. There were 329 uncompleted contracts with a total work-in-progress dollar value of \$1,391,277,435.89.

STREET WASTE GETTING A "SECOND CHANCE" WITH WSDOT

The Environmental Service Branch staff has coordinated re-use of street wastes (vactor solids, sweepings) for a roadside soil enhancement project adjacent to SR 16 and Skyline Drive in Tacoma. One thousand cubic yards of the material is being "mined" from a WSDOT disposal site in Tacoma and will be mixed with mulch and topsoil to allow for better growth of plants. Re-use of this previous waste has been approved by Ecology and the local Health Department. The Tacoma re-use of street wastes is a first for WSDOT and with success of this program, other re-use sites throughout the state will be developed.

Response to WSDOT's offer to jointly develop street wastes facilities has been received from the city of Richland, and Clark and Kitsap Counties. WSDOT maintenance needs vactor dewatering facilities in these areas and it is anticipated that multi-user sites will be available in the summer of 1997.

DOT CONTRIBUTION TO PEDESTRIAN/BIKE CONFERENCE IMPRESSIVE

The 2nd Annual Footprints and Bike Tracks Conference was held on October 10, 11, and 12 at the Seattle Center. Two WSDOT sponsored workshops (Pedestrian Facility and Bicycle Facility Design) were held as part of the conference on October 10. Over 100 local agency representatives, bicycle and pedestrian advocates, and Department engineers attended the two workshops.

Approximately 260 people attended the other two days of workshops on October 11 and 12. WSDOT staff presented recent studies on bicycle and pedestrian safety produced by the Traffic Data office as well as information on the "Guidebook for Student Pedestrian Safety" produced by the Traffic Operation office and other agencies.

FIELD TRIP LEADS TO MORE SIDEWALKS FOR WSDOT

During September, staff from the WSDOT's Traffic Office and Highways and Local Roadways Division led a field trip for research engineers from the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center. The researchers agreed to incorporate sidewalks on WSDOT routes as part of a larger FHWA project. Before and after sidewalk construction pedestrian activity will be quantified. These sites are on state routes at locations where sidewalks are programmed for near term construction. Data derived from this study will analyze an increase (or decrease) in the amount of walking trips after sidewalks are constructed, thus reducing the need for short auto trips.

HERITAGE CORRIDORS COMMITTEE PRIORITIZES ACTIVITIES

Most of the last Heritage Corridors Advisory Committee meeting agenda was dedicated towards prioritizing existing and proposed work areas. The Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from various heritage related interest groups, identified the following three areas as the most important:

- Increasing WSDOT's provision of technical assistance to advocacy groups interested in developing corridor management plans;

- Increasing the availability of safety rest areas and roadside parks throughout the state;
- Increasing the consistency of traveler services such as safety rest areas, interpretive markers, viewpoints, and traveler information.

HCP staff intends to incorporate these recommendations into proposed revisions to the I-3 Scenic Byway and Safety Rest Area service objectives.

OUTREACH SESSIONS MAKING SUCCESSFUL CONTACTS

The five statewide Freight Mobility Outreach Work sessions are complete. These work sessions were designed to gather input from public and private freight interests statewide. The meetings were well attended by representatives of state, regional and local government as well as the ports in each area. In addition to the letters of invitation sent to each potential participant, extra effort is being made to encourage the participation of private industry.

TWO NEW “TEAMS” CONTRIBUTE TO FREIGHT MOBILITY EFFORT

As a part of the Department's effort in freight mobility, an Executive Freight Team and Technical Support Team were established and began meeting in October. The Executive Freight Team, which includes nine senior managers in the Department, including the four WSDOT members of the LTC-established Freight Mobility Advisory Committee (FMAC), will provide executive and policy guidance on the Department's position on freight issues for the next legislative session. The Technical Support Team, with assistance from all WSDOT divisions, will provide technical support to the Executive Freight Team and the FMAC in its work to develop state legislation to address freight mobility issues. The project will involve extensive work to develop support materials and an action plan for freight mobility in the state.

STAMPEDE PASS REOPENING APPROVED

On October 25, 1996, the Federal Surface Transportation Board (STB) formally approved the purchase of the Washington Central Railroad (WCRC) by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and the reopening of the Stampede Pass route connecting Auburn to Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Yakima and Pasco. The approval is contingent on BNSF meeting 13 environmental mitigation conditions and several employee-protection provisions.

These mitigation measures were developed by Surface Transportation Board staff, who conducted an independent environmental assessment, including input from local communities. The assessment considered the impacts on safety, energy, air quality, noise and vibration, land use, water, biological resources and cultural resources. The mitigation measures outlined in the STB decision were declared adequate even if rail traffic exceeds ten trains per day in the future. The decision does not include any requirements for grade separations along the Stampede Pass and WCRC routes.

Two of the 13 mitigation measures involve WSDOT. First, BNSF must consult with the state of Washington and appropriate local officials to develop a priority list and discuss options for upgrading crossing signals, where necessary, due to increases in rail traffic resulting from the purchase of WCRC. Second, prior to initiation of operations along any part of the Stampede Pass and WCRC lines, BNSF must consult with appropriate state and local highway authorities to post appropriate signage to alert motorists about reinstitution of rail service and increased rail traffic.

SR 16 LIST OF ALTERNATIVES NARROWING

The SR 16 Stakeholder Committee met for the second time on October 18 and considered public comments on the problem statement, evaluation criteria, and the proposed 14

alternative solutions to be studied for the SR 16/Tacoma Narrows Major Investment Study. Eleven additional alternatives suggested by the public were added to the list to go through the initial evaluation screen. This “fatal flaw” analysis will eliminate many alternatives from further study because certain alternatives won’t solve some or all of the issues. The Stakeholder Committee will meet on November 22 to advise the Department on the results of the initial screening. The remaining alternatives will be further investigated in the second screening evaluation where they will be refined and or eliminated from further study. The confirmed alternatives will be presented for public comment and may then go forward for study in the Environmental Impact Statement.

OEO KEEPS CONTRACTORS AWARE OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) staff met with representatives from the Northern Chapter of the Association of General Contractors (AGC) in Bellingham to discuss concerns regarding the disadvantaged minority and women’s business enterprises (DMWBE) program. The concerns ranged from the problem with bonding for DMWBEs to qualifications and certification of certain DMWBE contractors. Some of the concerns expressed by AGC stemmed from lack of knowledge and experience of the DMWBE program. To correct the problem, it was agreed that OEO would be contacted by the AGC to conduct training workshops for their members. As to their bonding concerns, OEO made AGC aware of the USDOT banking and bonding program, which provides bonding for DBEs working on federally funded highway projects.

MAIT PARTICIPATED IN REVIEW OF EXTENDED CLOSURE OF I-5

The MAIT (Major Accident Investigation Team) participated in an exhaustive review of the August 30, 1996 accident involving 42 vehicles which occurred on I-5 in Federal Way. The review included attending a debriefing at the Kent Washington State Patrol office along with DOT Incident Response personnel from the Northwest Region. Items reviewed included response times, communications and coordination between all parties involved. All four lanes southbound were closed for 4 1/2 hours that day until the wreckage could be sufficiently cleared to allow partial opening. Needed improvements in command post communication operations were concluded.

UNIT BID ANALYSIS & STANDARD ITEM TABLE DATA ON INTERNET

By early November, Management Information Services will have completed the implementation of the request from the Olympia Service Center Plans Office to obtain Unit Bid Analysis (UBA) and Standard Item Table (SIT) data and place it on the Internet. “Leading edge” technology was utilized to build and load the viewing windows dynamically with data obtained directly from production databases on WSDOT’s wide-area network. The project was completed in less than half the original time and dollar estimate. The Plans Office anticipates a considerable cost savings and time savings spent on taking requests, running reports, and furnishing information for SIT and UBA data.

TALGO FOCUS GROUP GATHERING NEW TRAIN INFORMATION

The Rail Office hosted the first of four focus group meetings to gather input on the new Talgo trains. These meetings are designed to gain the input and consensus from employees working the Talgo train, customers, and the travel industry. The group will establish criteria, review proposed interior/exterior designs, and make recommendations on the designs. The award winning Amtrak Rail Design Center will be reviewing the criteria and proposing several concepts that meet the criteria established by the group. Input from consumer market focus groups and other Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor experts have been incorporated into this effort.

MULTIMODAL PROJECT GOAL IS TO MEET NEEDS OF ALL INVOLVED

Public Transportation Office staff, joined by staff from the Olympic Region and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), met with Clallam Transit and Port Angeles city officials. Discretionary FFY 97 appropriations for FTA Section 5309 earmarked \$992,500 for a Port Angeles project which is an extension of the ferry terminal area. This facility is designed to mitigate the traffic congestion caused by Black Ball Ferry vehicle loading and unloading procedures and enhance the physical appeal of downtown. The result of the meeting is a project that meets Port Angeles' goals, brings in Clallam Transit as a partner, and is acceptable to FTA for grant purposes.

PORT OF COLUMBIA ACCEPTS DONATED RAIL LINE

The 39-mile Walla Walla to Dayton rail line was donated to the Port of Columbia by Union Pacific Railroad. Having the Port of Columbia accept the line from the Union Pacific was critical for the long-term survival of rail service to the communities and shippers of Prescott and Dayton. In addition to improved access to public funds, having the Port of Columbia as an active partner in the railroad business bodes well for the future of rail service on this line. The decision by the Port to accept the rail line, was the catalyst for the following two significant events:

WSDOT agreed to release the state funds that were included in the \$1.4 million emergency state grant to repair the flood damaged Blue Mountain Railroad. Funds to complete flood repairs of the rail line from Prescott to Dayton were being held up by WSDOT until the Port agreed to be a partner and accept the Union Pacific donation. With the Port's acceptance of the donation, construction has commenced on rebuilding the rail line from Prescott to Dayton.

The Blue Mountain Railroad agreed to complete the remainder of the federal and state funded \$1.2 million rehab project of the Walla Walla to Dayton line. The project was only 50 percent complete and had stopped when the line was washed out. With the future of the line in jeopardy, the Blue Mountain Railroad was not willing to proceed with the rest of the rehab project unless the Port accepted ownership of the line and became an active partner with the Blue Mountain Railroad and WSDOT.

CASCADE & COLUMBIA RIVER RAILROAD CARRYING A FULL LOAD

The former Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad's Wenatchee to Oroville rail line was divested to a new short line named the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad. In 1995, this 134-mile rail line originated or terminated approximately 7,000 carloads (which equals approximately 21,000 heavily loaded trucks removed from state and local roads). This rail line is the only rail service available to the communities and shippers of Rocky Reach, Entiat, Chelan, Pateros, Brewster, Chief Joseph, Omak, Okanogan, Janis, and Oroville. WSDOT Rail Office intends to work closely with the Cascade and Columbia River Railroad to help ensure that rail service will continue on this light-density rail line.

COMMUTE TRIP REDUCTION BEGINS PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

In response to an overwhelming need from the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) affected employers and local jurisdictions, the CTR Task Force has begun steps toward developing a CTR public awareness campaign. During employer forums, focus groups and other correspondence with the CTR Task Force, CTR employers and local jurisdictions implementing CTR have repeatedly expressed the need for increased public awareness about CTR and transportation-related issues.

FREIGHT MOBILITY IMPROVEMENTS GOAL FOR "FAST" PROJECT

Participating with the Office of Urban Mobility (OUM) and Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), the Office of Public Transportation and Rail are providing staff work on the Freight Action Strategy for the Seattle-Tacoma Corridor (FAST Corridor) project. The project goal is to develop a strategy for freight mobility improvements within the corridor. At the October committee workshop, a consultant presented national and international experiences with railway and roadway grade crossing conflicts and separation. The consultant also suggested elements of a methodology for prioritizing projects within the Puget Sound FAST corridor. The expectation is that jurisdictions can agree upon corridor objectives and that an initial corridor strategy, with initial project prioritization, can be developed by mid-November through several meetings of the FAST-CAST committee.

I-5 RAMP METERS BEGIN OPERATING THROUGH SEATTLE

On October 14, WSDOT began operating ramp meters at nine on-ramps to I-5 through the downtown Seattle corridor. Depending on ramp locations and traffic volumes, some meters operate during both morning (6 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.) and evening (2 p.m. to 7 p.m.) commute hours; others operate during one commute period. Three ramps have high-occupancy-vehicle bypass lanes that allow carpools and transit buses to bypass the ramp meters.

The main purpose of these downtown ramp meters is to reduce accidents at merge points, thus reducing accident-related congestion. I-5 meters operating north of downtown have decreased accidents by 39 percent, despite higher traffic volumes. Because accident rates are expected to decrease in the downtown area, traffic engineers hope to see mainline traffic moving more efficiently through the corridor.

Ramp meters are one of the most cost-effective ways WSDOT has to efficiently operate freeways. The ramp meters usually allow one car through each green light, controlling the rate at which cars enter the freeway to every 4 to 15 seconds. This creates a space between merging cars, which reduces disruptions to mainline traffic and reduces accidents at merge points. The ramp meters are programmed to adjust meter rates automatically in response to real-time mainline and ramp traffic volumes. The performance of these ramp meters will be closely monitored by traffic specialists in WSDOT's Traffic Systems Management Center in Shoreline. For a few weeks, operators staffing the center will watch the meters through closed-circuit television cameras, and if necessary will override the computer system to manually operate meter cycles.

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON WSDOT/WSP BELLINGHAM FACILITY

Construction has begun on a new joint-use facility that will house the Washington State Department of Transportation's Bellingham area maintenance headquarters and the Washington State Patrol's Bellingham Detachment. The new facility will be located off Airport Way and Bakerview Road. It replaces the WSDOT maintenance facility that was destroyed by a fire in January 1994.

Cree Construction Co. Inc. of Lynnwood received the contract for a low bid of \$4,175,000. The project is scheduled for completion by the end of June 1997. The two agencies plan to move in by the end of August.

QUALITY ITEMS:

QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS GETTING A SECOND LOOK

The North Central Region Planning Office will be taking a lead role and participating with the other Regional Planning Offices to evaluate the Development Review Process. This task

force will be supported by the OSC Planning Office and will use the Quality Blueprint and other continuous improvement tools to guide this process review.

Historically, WSDOT has commented to local agencies through the SEPA review process on the transportation impacts and mitigation to the state highways. Each region has handled developer reviews differently and within regions the local agencies cooperate differently. Impacts are generally to highways, but often affect pedestrians, bikes, transit, and rail. The Regional Planning Managers have the direct contact with this process and will be reviewing the appropriate level of involvement.

Issues that will be reviewed include: the evaluation of benefits and the resulting value associated with transportation improvements, determining appropriate thresholds for review, examining what changes should be implemented in the agreement process, incorporating access management into the review process, and the development of a statewide Developer Services Guide.

PAVEMENT PATCHING TEAM STRIVING TO CUT COSTS

The North Central Region Pavement Patching Team has concluded testing for this season, but will continue next season with the goal of reducing patching costs to \$30/ton. Planning efforts for the team will continue through the winter. A training video has been developed by the team which they will continue to edit and revise. A spin-off development from this team has occurred in coordination with the planning office resulting in the development of a computerized maintenance deficiency log. From a maintenance perspective this log will be used to track pavement deficiencies and provide another means of measurement. From a planning perspective this log will be used to provide additional detail and feedback for the route development planning process.

STREAMLINED PROCESS IS SAVING MONEY

With the assistance of the Forms Office, the Aviation Division has streamlined the issuance of graduation and FAA certificates for the Flight Instructor re-certification clinics. The next project in this regard will be to address the Pilot Registration. Presently pilots are notified, reminded and processed through mail-outs which have been costly. The new system will use post cards and automatically process, resulting in cost savings to the Division.

OMBUDSMAN OFFICE COMMITTED TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Ombudsman Office has been busy developing its strategic plan. Over 30 action items for further development have been indentified, including a number of process improvements. It is hoped to have a workplan developed for each of the items by mid-December.

IDENTITY GROUP TRAINING DRAWS WSF TEAM TOGETHER

On October 15, Washington State Ferries held an all-inclusive employee identity group training day. Speakers addressed topics such as Total Quality Management at WSF, diversity and cross cultural communications in the work place, stress management, mentoring, conflict resolution, and family work issues such as day care and job sharing. WSF executives also provided an open forum for employees to ask them questions. Vice Chair of the Transportation Commission, Connie Niva, gave out employee awards. Awards were voted on by WSF employees for their co-workers who promote diversity, treat others fairly, and mentor other WSF employees.

WSF STRUTS THEIR STUFF AT PUBLIC SECTOR QUALITY DAY

The WSF TQM Pilot Team made a presentation at the First Annual Public Sector Quality Day held in Olympia on October 25. Out of forty team applications, twelve were chosen from Washington State agencies to present their processes and accomplishments. After the WSF Team shared pilot background, quality tools, and lessons learned, the entire team participated in answering questions from the audience. The Team members were honored to be among speakers such as Sid Morrison, the Directors of Labor and Industries and Department of Agriculture, Employment Security Commissioner, and the Secretary of DSHS.

QUALITY PERFORMANCE MERITS FHWA COMMENDATION

The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) received continued approval from FHWA of WSDOT's 1996 Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Assurances Update. WSDOT is commended for its efforts in performing 13 follow-up reviews, which resulted from non-compliance findings during FY 1994 and FY 1995, in addition to performing its regularly assigned EEO contract compliance reviews for FY 1996. FHWA is fully supportive of WSDOT's efforts to include local agency EEO compliance personnel, applicable TransAid personnel, Regional level EEO Officers, and project engineers in its EEO outreach training sessions. FHWA especially commended WSDOT in its efforts to pursue one-on-one training of contractor personnel and for its efforts in administering sanction actions against contractors Structures, Inc. and R.W. Scott.

WSDOT UPDATES FORMS LIST TO CUT WASTE

Forms Management has completed its sunset review of the department's 1,486 forms. The goal was to identify a form owner for each form and to obsolete forms no longer in use or with low usage according to records. Four hundred and eighty forms met these criteria. On July 1, the Forms Office mailed copies of these forms to offices/service centers/modes/regions departmentwide and asked for assistance in identifying form owners and forms' status. As a result, 272 forms have been made obsolete and 216 form owners were identified.

MAIL ROOM SURVEY HELPS WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE

During a month-long survey ending October 4, 1996, the department Mail Center sent out 105 survey cards to the Olympia Service Center, 13 satellite offices plus each Region's Mail Room. Fifty-two survey cards were returned and forwarded to the Office of Policies, Studies and Analysis where the data was compiled and analyzed. The mailroom was rated on accurate delivery service, prompt and courteous service, perceiving adequate information concerning changes which may impact your mailings, and quick resolution of mail problems. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being high), the overall rating came out to a 4.53 satisfaction rate of the Mail Center. Comments ranged from "great customer service, exemplary job, professional staff" to discontent with receiving others mail. The mailroom, which processes an average of 65,000 pieces of incoming, outgoing, campus and freight mail per month, is working on improving accurate delivery service along with continuing customer service.

WSDOT'S NEW PARKING POLICY TO ASSIST WORKSITES

The Internal TDM Program recently published WSDOT's first worksite parking management policy. This policy was created in response to legislation that requires all state agencies to assess employee parking demand and ensure that parking spaces are distributed equally at those worksites where employee parking space demand exceeds supply. The legislation also stipulates that no special preferences are to be given to managers in this distribution process. The WSDOT parking policy is the product of a joint effort that involved all levels of management, employees, and union representatives. The parking

policy is accompanied by a Parking Management Handbook that will assist affected worksites in the implementation process.

GOOD NEWS ITEMS:

CREW GOES ALL OUT TO REPAIR WATERWAY BRIDGE

When an electrical problem was discovered on the Chehalis River Bridge late in the evening on October 1, WSDOT's Aberdeen Maintenance "city crew," with assistance from Grays Harbor PUD, went all out to get the bridge back on line. A short in the utility line, along with improperly grounded transformers, caused an electrical overload and burn out of the three transformers that power the span. Under Coast Guard regulations the 50 year-old span must be opened to ships "on demand," with only 30 minutes notice. The waterway is used by Weyerhaeuser and fishing vessels.

The WSDOT crew worked until 2 a.m. October 2 to diagnose the problem, and then returned later that morning to begin repairs. Grays Harbor PUD assisted by furnishing, at cost, three new transformers from their supply yard, and provided a boom truck to lower the transformers into the bridge. The bridge team worked well into the morning of October 3 to install, power up and test the new transformers. The waterway was reopened to vessels in minimal time. WSDOT Aberdeen Maintenance crew has developed electrical plans for the transformer hook-up, which have been reviewed and approved by a WSDOT electrical engineer, to prevent the possibility of future electrical overloads.

WSDOT LIGHTING THE WAY FOR DARRINGTON AIRPORT

The Darrington Airport, owned and operated by the City of Darrington, has received the National Lighting Project of the Year Award from the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America. The lighting project was funded and installed by the WSDOT- Aviation Division as part of multi-jurisdictional restoration project that also resulted in new taxiways, a new runway, safety improvements, and a successful attempt at attracting new business to the Airport and the City. In nominating Darrington Airport, the WSDOT- Aviation Division cited the project for supporting the community and serving as a catalyst for economic development in an economically depressed area.

PROJECTS NOW ON INTERNET

As of October 25, 1996 the Advance Schedule of Projects will be available on the Internet. The Advance Schedule of Projects is a list of projects that are programmed for construction in the current biennium and are sent to contractor agencies, minority centers, various trade organizations and publishers. You will find it on the WSDOT Home Page at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov> The Advance Schedule of Projects is listed on the Construction Office page under the heading of Contract Ad and Awards.

WSDOT COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS INCREASING

The number of incoming calls on the WSDOT Ombudsman Office toll-free line is increasing as more directories are listing the number. In September we received 59 calls, twice the number we received in August on that line. The number is 1-800-DOT ALLY (368-2559).

TIRE FIRE NO MATCH FOR WSDOT EMPLOYEE'S EXPERIENCE

At the October 21, 1996, Longview Field Office safety/crew meeting, Steve Gacke received a recognition award for his role in the SR-100 tire fill remediation. The tire fire, classified as a hazardous spill, occurred immediately adjacent to Baker Bay, and received immediate national media attention. Acting as the WSDOT representative on the U.S. Coast Guard Unified Command Structure as Incident Commander, Steve managed the

WSDOT workforce engaged in administering the project. Steve established three primary goals for the successful completion of the project: public and worker safety; minimizing environmental impacts; minimizing project costs.

Steve was aided in his decisions by support from the Environmental Affairs Office, the Regional Construction Office, and the Olympia Service Center Construction Office.

WSDOT A WINNER AT THE HIGHWAY DESIGN AWARDS

On October 7, FHWA announced the winners of the 1996 Excellence in Highway Design Biennial Awards. In each category there was one winner of the Award of Excellence, and up to three Merit Award winners.

WSDOT received an Award of Merit in Category 5, Environmental Protection and Enhancements. This award goes to Northwest Region for State Route 527 - SR405 to 164th Street SE Five Lane Widening project in Snohomish County. The overall purpose of this project was to widen a two-lane highway to five lanes. Safety improvements and environmental enhancements provided pedestrian sidewalks, bicycle lanes, bus pullouts, storm water detention, wetland mitigation, and stream relocation. The preservation and protection of streams, wetlands, and wildlife habitat was a priority during design in order to minimize impacts to natural areas.

NEW RECORDS INDEX SYSTEM IMPLEMENTED

A new computer system has been developed and implemented for Records Services and Engineering Records. The new program replaces the D-Base system which was out-dated and cumbersome to operate. With the new system, staff is able to search for records by title, sign, route, location, contract number and many more fields depending on which file is being searched. This system increases efficiency while enhancing customer service.

“SMART TRIPPER” A HIT WITH TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The WSDOT CTR Program and Kitsap Transit have joined forces to revise a student transportation curriculum developed by Kitsap Transit and distribute the product to over 1,400 teachers statewide. Teachers interested in using the “Smart Tripper” workbook in their classroom simply contact the CTR office for enough copies for their class. The project was funded through a grant to Kitsap Transit from the Washington State Energy Office. The project is an effort to respond to CTR employer and jurisdiction feedback about the need for increased education about alternative commuting among students.

SECRETARY MORRISON APPOINTED AS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Secretary of Transportation Sid Morrison was recently appointed as Chair of the AASHTO Standing Committee on Rail Transportation (“SKORT”). The committee deals with passenger and freight issues at the state DOT level nationwide.

CEREMONY RECOGNIZES MATHER MEMORIAL PARKWAY MILESTONE

A ceremony marking a milestone toward completion of several long-overdue improvements to a 10-mile stretch of the 53-mile Mather Memorial Parkway on State Route 410 was held late last month. The event took place in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest just east of the town of Greenwater on Oct. 28.

This cooperative venture among the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the U. S. Forest Service, the National Park Service and the Washington State Department of Transportation has improved the road by widening each lane to 12 feet and building 4-foot shoulders. In addition, 9-foot grass slopes were built beyond the shoulders that provide biofiltration (to reduce amounts of road contaminants and salts in road runoff before it

reaches the forest) and create a "recovery zone" to minimize the possibility of vehicles hitting fixed objects such as large rocks and trees.

The goal of this job was to create a unified and unique identity for the parkway using structures built from materials native to the area, such as quarried stone and timber. Crews will install new entrance and directional signs made of quarried stone and wood panels. Several interpretive vehicle pullouts were built with stone and masonry detailing. Interpretive panels to be posted at the sites will outline geological and historical facts of interest. New informational signs to guide motorists to facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas and hiking trails will be installed next year.